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SIPDIS

FOR I/FW, B/G, IIP/G/NEA-SA, B/VOA/N (BANGLA SERVICE) STATE
FOR SA/PAB, SA/PPD (LSCENSNY, SSTRYKER), SA/RA, INR/R/MR,
AND PASS TO USAID FOR ANE/ASIA/SA/B (WJOHNSON)

CINCPAC FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR, J51 (MAJ TURNER), J45
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USARPAC FOR APOP-IM (MAJ HEDRICK)

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SUBJECT: Media Reaction: Bomb blast in Egypt,Dhaka

Summary:

Bomb Attacks in Sharms el Sheik and London

"Bomb Attacks in Egypt"

Anti-West Bangla language newspaper "Inqilab" editorially
comments (7/25):

We have no words to express our indignation to those who carried out the attacks. We strongly protest and condemn them. We think that nothing great can be achieved through the killing of innocent people. Killing will only increase violence. Terrorism is now a worldwide problem. Unfortunately, fingers are pointed to Muslims for whatever happens in the world. It is not yet known who were behind the two attacks in London. Nevertheless, Muslims have been held responsible and subjected to harassment. It seems that none other than Muslims can launch this kind of attacks or subversive activities. This idea is very dangerous and a threat to world peace.... The so-called war against terror is a war against Muslims. New crusaders hold Muslims responsible blindly for any terrorist incident in the world and increase their hostility to Muslims. The world Muslim leadership must realize this conspiracy and deal with the situation with prudence. Terrorism must be rejected, condemned and resisted always. The causes of terrorism must be identified and it must be thoroughly investigated to find out who are engaged in terrorism. A terrorist is a terrorist, his national identity cannot be taken in consideration. It should be kept in mind that Islam has no relations with terrorism. Islam does not support any kind of terrorism. If a Muslim is engaged in terrorist activities, Islam does condone him and his crimes.

"This Barbarism Must be ended"

Pro-opposition Bangla language newspaper "Sangbad"
editorially comments (7/25):

...The strong strategy adopted by those who are leading the war against terror is paving the way for terrorist activities. Bush-Blair has divided the world instead of uniting the world against terrorism. This division has, in fact, facilitated terrorism.

The dangerous thing is that these incidents of terrorism have encouraged local terrorist organizations to be connected with international terrorist networks. This dangerous process is going on in many countries, including Bangladesh. The government's commitment to fight terrorism, be it local or international, is not sincere. Sometimes, it takes some measures against terror, but they are just for show. It is not difficult for anybody to realize that these are not sincere efforts. There is no scope for any nation to remain idle in the war against international terrorism.

"Egypt's tragedy"

Independent English language newspaper "New Age" editorially
comments (7/25):

Those who have gone around promoting suicide killings through the murder of innocent people in such places as Madrid, Bali, London and now Sharm el Sheikh have clearly embraced the belief that their methods are the only ones that can force the world's powerful nations to their knees. For their part, the argument which men in Washington and London have always made, that terrorists have been working to destabilize life everywhere, is surely true. But what cannot at the same time be ignored is that much of the violence we observe around us today has been spawned by all the things that have gone wrong in Iraq.

There is, in light of the darkness that one notices falling

across increasingly bigger swathes of the globe, a need today for policy makers in the West - and we particularly mean the United States and Britain - to rethink policy. Sooner or later, it should be for President Bush and Prime Minister Blair to consider the options before them, one of which is to have their troops go back home from Iraq. While there is no guarantee that such a move will take Iraq back to normal (it is a devastated country today with nearly everyone out to grab what he can out of the mess), it will be a significant way of defusing the militancy that has been cropping up everywhere. We condemn, as we have always condemned, those who make targets of innocent civilians. Terrorism, we believe fully and unequivocally, is an evil that needs to be defeated at the earliest. At the same time, we think that the time has come for leaders in the West to tone down their hubris somewhat and acknowledge that a good deal of the terror we have been through in the last couple of years has been a direct result of the flawed policies they have pursued in places like Iraq and Guantanamo Bay.

Our prayers go out to the families of those killed in Egypt. Our hope is that the perpetrators or planners of this dark deed will be brought to justice soon.

"Carnage at Sharm El-Sheikh"
Centrist English language newspaper "News Today" editorially comments (7/25):

Saturday's carnage at the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm El-Sheikh adds a whole new dimension to the "war on terror" mega serial authored jointly by Messrs Bush and Blair. Eighty-eight dead and close to 200 injured puts it at par with the last week's London blasts but the similarity probably ends there. While the London blasts must be seen as continuation of defiance by people under pressure the attacks in the Egyptian resort clearly means taking the fight to the doorsteps of those who actively or passively have aided, abetted and colluded with the US-led coalition in its so-called war on terror. The kidnapping and subsequent killing of a very senior Egyptian diplomat in Iraq only the other day also falls in the same pattern. The message is loud and clear : at the end of more than two years of relentless pursuit the so-called terrorists today look not only more organized but even capable of striking anywhere at will. Nothing could be more embarrassing for the Bush and Blair administrations.

Policymakers in Washington and London should now realize that they just cannot fight a faceless enemy. The "Islamic extremists" coinage is a very poor attempt at putting a face on the enemy but with world's Muslim population close to one billion this sounds like a joke. And why talk about the Muslims only? What about the deprived millions of Asia, Africa and Latin America? They too have grievances.... The problem was not Saddam Hossein or his rogue regime; the problem lies in the global order that tilted heavily against the majority. Days when colonial powers occupied countries and ruled them peacefully are long over. Even the world's lone superpower with an arsenal good enough to destroy the earth cannot hope to rule colonies through remote control. Iraq was the first lesson in this. If Washington goes for escalation the only casualty would be peace. It is a war, no doubt, but one that cannot be won by military might alone.

Will Sharm El-Sheikh prompt Arab countries who have all these years looked like stooges of the west to rewrite their positions and assume a more pro-active role in their region? Only they can act as balm and persuade the boiling minds in Iran, Iraq, Syria, Palestine and elsewhere to give them an opportunity to work out a deal acceptable to all. Our sincere sympathies for the victims of the latest act of violence.

Chammas